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# LEAGUE OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONS

Sixth Annual Meeting at Bretton Woods, N. H., July 2-3, 1909.

## FIRST SESSION

(Friday, July 2, 1909, 10 a. m.)

The first session was called to order July 2, at 10:00 a. m., by the President, Mrs Percival Sneed, of Georgia. In her opening address the Chair called attention to the fact that five new library commissions had been established during the past year, including the states of Illinois, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Utah.

The Treasurer, Miss Sarah B. Askew, New Jersey, then presented her report which was accepted.

An amendment to the Constitution, combining the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, was adopted, upon the unanimous recommendation of the Executive board.

In the absence of MISS MARY E. HAZELTINE, Chairman, Mr Chalmers Hadley, Indiana, presented the

## REPORT OF THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

The Publication committee begs to submit the following report of its work since the mid-winter meeting in Chicago, January 1909, as to the progress of publications in hand and new publications that are contemplated:

**Swedish list.** An important addition to the lists of foreign books for American libraries and making the fifth in number, is the "Swedish list," compiled by Miss Valfrid Palmgren of Stockholm and edited by the Minnesota public library commission. This is printed in the same style as the other foreign lists and is a most valuable contribution. Miss Palmgren brought to this work a quick sympathy and a thorough knowledge of Swedish literature. Equal appreciation is due to Miss Clara F. Baldwin, Secretary of the Minnesota public library commission, and to the Commission itself for the immense amount of work which was done on the list. The introduction was written by the compiler, and gives an excellent idea of the list's purpose. In regard to it, she says "Need I tell you that I have tried

to do my very best and that I have worked not only with my brains but also with my heart. . . . May it be of use to your libraries and cause some pleasure to my countrymen in your country." In addition to the excellent books by Swedish authors, the compiler has included a number of books by American authors, which have been translated into Swedish, in order to interest the newly arrived immigrant in the history and life of his adopted country even before he can read its language. Full bibliographic information is given to assist the librarian who wishes to purchase Swedish books.

**Mending and repair of books.** Much interest has been shown by commissions in the pamphlet on "Mending and repair of books", which has been in charge of Miss Margaret W. Brown of the Iowa library commission. Work on this pamphlet has been delayed, but the material is now ready and copies of the ms. will shortly be sent out, for the author wishes an actual test made, before her material is put into print, of the merit of the pamphlet's suggestions as to mending and repair of books.

**Tract No. 10.** This tract, compiled by Mr Chalmers Hadley of the Indiana library commission and published by the A. L. A. Publishing board, was combined this year with a revised edition of Tract No. 1, and the reprint which is now in press bears the title "Why do we need a public library? Material for a library campaign." The tract consists of condensed statements from library articles and addresses, and actual newspaper editorials which have done good service in a campaign for a public library.

**Children's suggestive list.** A valuable aid in the selection of children's books suitable for grades below the high school, is that in preparation by the Wisconsin free library commission. This list probably will be ready for use next autumn and will be limited to about 500 titles, exclusive of books for the youngest readers. It aims to meet the needs of libraries in small towns, but includes many standard titles which children should be encouraged to read. In arrangement and annotation the list promises to be unusually valuable to library workers.

Several editions will be indicated for well known titles, where there is a marked difference in price; about 100 of the best titles will be starred; full trade items will be given; short annotations provided when deemed desirable, and Library of Congress serial numbers will be supplied. It is probable that ages at which the different books are most suitable for children will be specified. The appendix will form an important part of the work and will include descriptions of various series of children's books, preferably recent, with the best titles starred, and special list of popular stories of boarding schools, stories of the West, Indian, detective, railroad stories, etc.

**Magazines for the small library.** Such was the demand for this pamphlet, compiled by Mrs Katharine MacDonald Jones, formerly of the Wisconsin commission, that the supply was exhausted very soon after the publication of the pamphlet last autumn. To meet the needs of the smaller libraries in particular, this pamphlet was brought to date this spring, many new inclusions made and it has now been reissued. It follows the original arrangement and was printed for the League of Library Commissions at actual cost price by the H. W. Wilson Co., of Minneapolis.

**Graded list of books and reference books for schools.** The League was fortunate this spring in securing 500 copies with its own imprint and cover, of the "Class-room libraries for public schools; listed by grades," prepared by the Buffalo public library. Following the preface, the books listed are classed in nine school grades, with an author-title index, subject index, reference books, stories about children for teachers and parents, and poetry about children for teachers and parents.

**Anniversaries and holidays.** The League also secured 500 copies of the pamphlet "Anniversaries and holidays, references and suggestions for picture bulletins," edited by Miss Mary E. Hazeltine and printed by the Wisconsin free library commission.

**Reading course for librarians.** Through an oversight, the question of the reading course for librarians did not come up for consideration at the January meeting of the League, in Chicago. Following that meeting, a committee was appointed by the President to confer with the Publication committee regarding this course. Its great value was realized, but there were several questions to be considered in connection with it, and the chairman of the Committee conferred with Miss Hazeltine, chairman of the Publication committee, and with Miss Mary E. Ahern, Editor of "Public Libraries", in regard to the course.

It was agreed that the proposed course should in no way be a correspondence course for technical training, but one to stimulate and broaden the interest of library workers in their profession; that nothing be printed for the course until the whole plan of work was outlined, and that this outline cover approximately two years; that the course would be of greatly increased value if reprints of library articles be provided, as so many libraries would lack the material cited in the course.

Also, since upon completion of the outline so much work would still be required in selecting books and articles for reading, it was suggested that references for the different topics in the reading course be selected by the different library commissions.

It was suggested also, that while the League should arrange the course, and through its members supply the citations, the editorial comment on the subjects under consideration should be made by the Editor of "Public Libraries."

Legislative sessions in several states made it impossible to do more than reach the above suggestions, and the absence of Miss Hazeltine in Europe, prevented a conference of the representatives of the League's committees with Miss Ahern. It is recommended, therefore, that action be not taken by the League until such a conference can be held later in the year, as the question of reprints will have to be decided before work upon the reading course can be begun with advantage.

It is recommended that the League provide for a list of books in Polish, to follow, in character and scope, the five foreign lists which have already been printed.

#### CHALMERS HADLEY

For the Committee

MR LEGLER then announced that the A. L. A. Publishing board had expressed a willingness to publish the pamphlet on "Mending and repair of books."

MR BAILEY moved that the offer of the Publishing board be accepted. Carried.

It was voted that suitable recognition be given Miss Palmgren for her splendid service in preparing the "Swedish list," and that the Secretary be requested to convey to Miss Palmgren the thanks of the League.

Upon motion, the report of the Publication committee was then accepted.

MR WILSON (Vt.) said that it was difficult for the people in New England to

attend the mid-winter meeting of the League in Chicago, and he gave a brief report of the meeting of New England library commission workers which was held in Hartford in the spring.

MR LEGLER then moved that a committee be appointed to make plans for sectional meetings of the League,—one in New England, one in the Middle West, and one on the Pacific Coast. Carried.

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM TRAVELING LI- BRARY BLANKS

Miss Charlotte Templeton, Nebraska, in the absence of the Chairman, MISS MARGARET BROWN, Iowa, submitted the following report:

Following the instructions given at the last mid-winter meeting of the League, your Committee on uniform traveling library blanks, put in tentative form three blanks, *i. e.*, a shipping record, a daily report blank, a monthly and yearly report blank. The items included in these blanks were those which had been decided upon at the mid-winter meeting, as necessary to give the desired information for comparison or uniformity. These tentative blanks were sent only to the commissions represented at the meeting, because it was thought best that they should be tested first by those who had participated in the discussion and decision regarding the various items to be included.

Blanks were sent to Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa. An explanatory and descriptive statement accompanied the blanks, with the request that an actual test be made of same in correlating with regular library records in use in the various states. This was later supplemented by a form for report on the use of the blanks, which included the following question: "After testing the blanks, is it your wish that uniform blanks be prepared by this Committee, following the form of the tentative blanks, with such changes or modifications as are deemed best after these reports are filed?"

The answers indicated that the majority were ready to accept the blanks in the present form, only a few suggesting slight modifications. From the responses received, your Committee believes that such blanks can be prepared as will answer the requirements of co-operating traveling libraries. Before placing the blanks in permanent form, time is desired in which to

make such changes as are deemed necessary, based on the reports already filed, and to make further test of these blanks by other traveling libraries desiring to co-operate.

Your Committee therefore suggests that an extension of time be given for this purpose until the coming mid-winter meeting of the League.

The report was accepted.

MISS MIRIAM E. CAREY, Minnesota, presented the following

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMISSION WORK IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

Last year's Committee on libraries in state institutions gathered statistics as to the relations of the commissions to those libraries. It was shown that out of 28 states which replied to the inquiries, 1 state, New Jersey, had entire control of institutional libraries, 10 had attempted co-operation with them, 5 gave frequent assistance and the remaining 12 had made no effort to reach these classes.

Since the last report Minnesota has included state charitable institutions on the same terms as public and school libraries. Indiana, Oregon, Michigan and Wisconsin have continued to assist these libraries in various ways. Wherever it has been possible to carry through any line of work in institutions, a use of books has resulted which is almost beyond belief. In the fifth biennial report of the Indiana commission, it is stated that at the State reformatory the circulation from a library of 5,000 volumes was 161,921. "This means that every inmate in the reformatory read 2 books a week during the period of his incarceration." In Iowa, out of an institution population of 9,580, 2,776 used the libraries. The insane and feeble-minded, who constituted nearly half this number, read less in proportion than the others, their percent being 12. Taking out these classes, the percentage of readers to population was 57. In the prison, men's reformatory and the reform schools the percentages were 67, 78, 79 and 61 respectively. 49 percent of the blind and 68 of the deaf used the library. In Minnesota, during May, 1909, at the prison there were 565 readers out of 718 men; and at the reformatory, 323 readers among 364 men.

In view of these facts, which reveal a much greater demand for books than is shown in public libraries, this Committee begs to submit a few statements and suggestions:

1 Every would-be reader has a claim upon librarians.

2 Every person whose circumstances make the need of books specially strong, has a specially strong claim.

3 Every locality which contains persons who use the books within reach regularly, has a claim that these books may be good books, and that they may grow better as time goes on.

4 When an environment deprives readers of initiative in obtaining these better things, the appeal is to recognized and established sources for such betterment.

5 When the established sources for betterment cannot be relied upon in library matters, the responsibility with regard to books and reading rests with library organizations.

In the segregated communities which we call state institutions, namely, the prisons and reformatories, the hospitals for the insane, and the schools for the deaf, the blind, and the feeble-minded, it has been proved by statistics that there are persons who wish to read; who need to read; and who do read whatever they can get.

Inmates of institutions are an absolutely dependent class. They have no initiative about anything whatever. The responsibility for their *material* welfare has been recognized more and more definitely with the passing years of the Christian era, and their spiritual and intellectual claims as well. But it is too much to expect that these necessities can be adequately provided for by any single body of men, whether legislatures, boards or trustees. Special needs should be dealt with by persons competent along these lines. That the standard for matters pertaining to the wants of these classes is as high as it is, and that it is attained as nearly as it is, is something for which humanity should congratulate itself. It is, however, too much to expect that the standard should be maintained without the help of all who count themselves as interested in social betterment.

It is necessary that different phases of the life of these people should be considered from time to time by others besides the governing boards who cannot be expected to be specialists. If religious organizations were content to ignore the claims of inmates of institutions and leave their religious welfare wholly to the initiative of legislatures, boards and trustees, they would do wrong. If educational organizations took no note of schools and scholars in institutions, they would have no right to blame those who are managing them if education were neglected. Would they, however, be blameless themselves?

As to books and reading in institutions, is not the appeal to librarians? Can they

ignore these communities where human beings wish to read, do read, and need to read? Realizing these conditions, and believing that commissions are the best equipped forces to improve them, this Committee makes the following suggestions:

Begin a "getting-in-touch" campaign by collecting statistics as to institution libraries with a view to including them in the reports of the commissions. Follow this up by personal visits and by talks about books and reading, especially in places where schools are carried on. Put the institutions on the mailing-list for the A. L. A. Booklist, and follow this by offers of help in selection of new books. Having in these ways shown the institution people that they are not outside the pale, but that the commission is a fellow-worker with them, it will not be difficult to arrange for a discussion of the best means to perfect library work in these places.

If the institutions prove indifferent or unwilling to undertake a new enterprise, then the commission may decide to include in its field these libraries rather than have them administered in haphazard fashion, or not at all. In this way the institution work becomes established to exist as long as the commission does, and to benefit from the commission's settled standard and technical equipment.

It is sometimes said that institutions resent the presence of outsiders. But, though it would be useless to undertake any sort of work in any institution against its will or without the consent and co-operation of the governing boards, yet it is true that once this consent is obtained the matter is as much settled as though a general had given an order to an army. For institution workers are accustomed to receiving orders from superior officers and do not concern themselves further than to obey them.

If the organizer of a commission is sent to institution libraries to serve them as the others in the state are served, results will not develop as rapidly as would be the case if the field were not so wide. In the case of the insane, it is doubtful if the much needed research and experimental work can be undertaken by so general an officer as a commission organizer. Library work among the insane is a new field. It offers an opportunity of service to the human race not surpassed in its possibilities by any undertaking now under consideration in civilized society. In order to prove or disprove the claim that books may be used as remedies, some one must devote months to experiment and observation in order to state definitely what books are best for certain classes

of the insane. No commission could expect to provide an officer for work of this kind, requiring his full time and so identified with hospital interests, but it is both a duty and a privilege of every commission to so demonstrate the need and possibilities of this work among the insane that the states will appoint librarians to supervise groups of hospitals, or carry on experimental work in each.

Why should this work not be attempted? Why not extend help to the thousands who perhaps need only the impulse which the right book would give them to be saved from becoming chronic patients? To those who have encountered the problem of the chronic insane and who realize the appalling numbers who are left in this condition to burden the states, any opening which offers a hope of help to this class would seem worthy of the support of every organization and individual that claims to be interested in questions of betterment.

Until library work among the insane becomes a special feature of the work and is provided for suitably, commissions can do much good by sending to these hospitals traveling libraries specially selected for the inmates. They should consist of cheerful books of a variety of kinds, all in attractive form; but religion, accounts of crime, hypnotism and kindred subjects should be eliminated from the collections.

Another way to take up institutional work is for the commission to take steps to show the controlling board the necessity and value of systematic library service, thus setting a standard, and then to withdraw in the belief that it is better to leave the institutions to themselves, as they have adequate funds for their needs and prefer to have their work carried on by their own employees. The objection to this plan is that during the time that it is left in the hands of boards of trustees, it is in danger from changes in the personnel of such bodies. Until the matter is taken out of their hands it can have no assured permanence, because their interests are too large and too diversified to make it certain that they will take a specialist's view of a special line of work. However, this method of procedure is simple and is in the power of any commission, but it is a question whether it is wise to undertake the introduction of a technical system unless its permanence is assured. Undoubtedly it would be better if the commission were not to withdraw after the initiatory steps, but to continue its campaign of education until the governing powers were willing to ask the legislature to set aside funds to make the library work in institutions an established feature.

Your Committee, then, recommends that all commissions get in touch with institutions by soliciting statistics for publication; by supplying the A. L. A. Book-list and offering to select new books; by personal visits and talks about library matters; by preparing and circulating special libraries among the insane; and finally by including the institution libraries in their several fields on the same terms as others, or, by urging upon the state authorities the needs of these people until a state librarian for institutions is appointed and provided for permanently from the public funds.

(Signed)

MIRIAM E. CAREY, Chairman  
LUTIE E. STEARNS  
SARAH B. ASKEW

Committee

MISS ASKEW supplemented the report with a most interesting account of the traveling libraries which have been sent by the New Jersey commission to the penal and charitable institutions of that state. The Commission has been aided in this work by the State board of charities and corrections, and the list of books for the insane has been chosen by the Board of directors of the hospitals for the insane.

MRS EARL moved that the report be adopted and that copies of its recommendations be sent to all library commissions. Carried.

THE PRESIDENT requested Mr Hadley to take the Chair while she presented an appeal for the need of books in the United States penitentiaries. One of these is located near Atlanta, and the warden presented its case at a meeting of the Georgia library association.

A most ill-assorted library has been collected by donations, but there is no appropriation for books in any of these institutions, and such an appropriation could only be secured by an act of Congress.

MISS HOBART maintained that the suggestion might well come from the League of Library Commissions, and upon her motion, it was voted that a committee be appointed to draw up resolutions, recommending that a law be passed making an appropriation for libraries in the United States penitentiaries; that copies of these resolutions be sent to each library commission; to influential congressmen; to

prominent newspapers, especially those which publish library news; and that if deemed advisable, the Committee might draft a bill.

Valuable suggestions as to ways of urging the plan were offered by Mr Green (Mass.), Mr Witcher and Mrs Root (R. I.). Mr Green, (Cal.) proposed that the matter be also referred to the American Library Association as a whole.

MR CHALMERS HADLEY presented the following

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESSENTIALS OF A MODEL COMMISSION LAW

At the mid-winter meeting of the League in Chicago, in January, 1909, it was proposed that some suggestions for a good library commission law be made. The frequent requests for such suggestions from library associations in non-commission states made this desirable, and the suggestions proposed by your Committee are given, not with any note of finality, but with the hope that they may prove valuable as a foundation.

Varied conditions in different states make it unwise if not impossible to do other than present tentative suggestions which can be modified to meet individual demands. Therefore, no state should adopt the proposals made without first understanding that they are intended only as suggestions which seem desirable after several years' experience in library commission activities and with the usual conditions which surround them.

In Section 2 of the proposed law, for instance, which relates to the appointment of the commission members, it is suggested that they be appointed, one for 1 year, one for 2 years, one for 3 years, one for 4 years and one for 5 years; and that thereafter all appointments shall be for 5 years.

Such an arrangement is proposed to protect the commission membership from any hostility which may arise during one single state administration of 4 years; but in the State of Indiana, for instance, this section would be unconstitutional as no governor can appoint for a term of office exceeding 4 years in length. The suggestions for a proposed law will be read first by sections, then some alternatives and explanations will be presented:

**1 Name.** (Name of state) library commission or (Name of state) public library commission. Said commission shall be assigned permanent quarters in the state house.

**2 Commissioners.** The board of commissioners shall consist of 5 members, to be appointed by the governor who shall also fill all vacancies for an unexpired term.

Members of the commission to serve without salaries, but actual expenses incident to attending meetings of the commission to be paid by the state. Members of the commission are not to be in the publishing business.

Appointments of the commissioners shall be: one for 1 year, one for 2 years, one for 3 years, one for 4 years, and one for 5 years; and thereafter all appointments shall be for 5 years.

**3 Organization of commission.** Officers of the commission shall be: a chairman elected from the members thereof for a term of one year, and a secretary, not a member of the commission, to be appointed by the commission, and who shall serve at the will of the commission, under such conditions and for such compensation as the commission shall deem adequate.

Said secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the commission; keep accurate accounts of its financial transactions; have charge of its work in organizing new libraries, and improving those already established; supervise the work of the traveling libraries; and in general, perform such duties as may from time to time be assigned him by said commission.

Said commission may also employ such other assistants as shall be required for the performance of the commission's work, who shall serve upon such conditions as the commission shall determine.

In addition to their salaries, the secretary and assistants shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses while absent from the commission office upon the service of the commission.

**4 Appropriations.** Appropriations to be statutory, and general. All bills shall be paid when approved and signed by the president and secretary of the commission and audited by the state auditor.

**5 Scope of work.** The commission shall give advice to all school, state institutional, free and public libraries, and to all communities in the state which may propose to establish libraries, as to the best means of establishing and administering them; selecting and cataloging books and other details of library management; and may send any of its members to aid in organizing such libraries or assist in the improvement of those already established. It may also receive gifts of money, books, or other property which may be used or held in trust for the purpose or purposes given; may purchase and operate traveling libraries, and circulate such libraries

within the state among communities, libraries, schools, colleges, universities, library associations, study clubs, charitable and penal institutions, under such conditions and rules as the commission deem necessary to protect the interests of the state and best increase the efficiency of the service it is expected to render the public.

It may publish lists and circulars of information, and said commission may co-operate with other state library commissions and libraries in the publication of documents, in order to secure the most economical administration of the work for which it was formed.

It may conduct courses or schools of library instruction and hold librarians' institutes in various parts of the state, and co-operate with others in such schools or institutes.

It may also conduct a clearing house for periodicals for free gift to local libraries, and said commission shall perform such other service in behalf of public libraries as it may consider for the best interests of the state.

In connection with and under the supervision of the president of each normal school in the state and the president of the state university, the commission may arrange for courses of lectures every year at each of the schools on, book selection, use and care of books, cataloging and administration of school libraries; may co-operate with the state board of education in devising plans for the care of school libraries, in aiding teachers in school library administration, and in formulating rules and regulations governing the use of such libraries throughout the state. Such suggestions, rules and regulations are to be promulgated through the state superintendent of public instruction.

**6 Reports.** The commission shall make a biennial report to the governor, which report shall show library conditions and progress in (State), and shall contain an itemized statement of the expenses of the commission. This report, when printed, shall be presented to the general assembly of the state. It shall be printed and bound by the state under the same regulations that govern the printing of the other reports of the executive officers of the state and it shall be distributed by the public library commission.

**7** All laws and parts of laws in conflict with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed.

#### Comment

**1 Name.** Many names have been used to designate the work of library organization and extension as they are now

carried on in the several states. Criticism has been passed on "Public library commission," and "Free library commission," as not making clear the character and kind of work done. It has been said, also, that these designations convey an idea of temporary organization and work, as commissions are frequently created for temporary services.

The names, "State library commission," and "Library extension department," have been proposed as better designations, but in the Committee's opinion "State library commission" would be confused with the governing board of the state library, when frequently that institution does not have charge of what is usually called commission work. The name, "Library extension department," gives no idea of the instructional and other phases of commission work. Therefore, the name (Name of state) library commission is preferred, and as an alternative (Name of state) public library commission.

In some states lack of room may prevent the commission from having offices in the state house, but ordinarily the commission should be assigned quarters there, as its work has a dignity and importance which should place it with the other departments of state work. It is an advantage also, to have the commission office where its force and work can become known to the officers of the state.

**2 Commissioners.** Five members best. A larger number is cumbersome, and a smaller number makes too uncertain all the support needed for the secretary and the work. The Committee does not favor any provision in a library commission law which makes obligatory any ex-officio members on the commission, for its work is too important to be jeopardized by ex-officio members whose time and interest would be divided between it and some other public work. It seems unfair to place heads of other departments of state work on the commission unless the secretary of the commission is appointed on boards controlling other departments of work. However, were no specific officers designated in the appointment of the commis-



sioners, it would still be possible to appoint a public officer as a library commissioner if this were advisable.

It is unwise to call any attention whatever to politics in appointments to the commission, even to the extent of designating that the commission shall be "non-partisan" or "bi-partisan."

**3 Organization of commission.** The provision prohibiting the appointment on the commission of any person connected with the publishing business is suggested as all book selection and recommendations made by the commission would be made under suspicion if such business connections were allowed.

The term of service of a commissioner should be 5 years, if constitutional in a state, to avoid any complete reorganization in a single administration of state government.

A provision to prevent the appointment of a secretary from the commission members seems wise, since without such limitations a self-perpetuating office would be possible.

In selecting a president of the commission, which should be done by the members themselves of the commission, it is wise if possible to select a member who lives in or near the city in which the commission's headquarters is located, for convenience and saving of time in securing his signature or approval on vouchers and bills.

In regard to the executive officer of a commission, one member of your Committee suggested that the title, "Director of library extension and Secretary of the board," be used as the term "Secretary" is sometimes taken in its purely clerical sense, and the title suggested would carry a larger meaning with commensurate influence in certain localities.

With a conscientious and interested library commission, as must be assumed, the secretary should be appointed without limitations, except to serve at the will of the commission. This will make easy the early removal of an undesirable secretary as well as protect a successful one in the continuation of good work. It seems better to place the responsibility of appoint-

ments to the commission's working force on the commission itself, although in reality the commission will likely make such appointments to the staff as are recommended by the secretary. One member of the Committee stated that, while the secretary would in reality recommend the appointment of assistants, to give him the appointing power would arouse hostile criticism.

**4 Appropriations.** Appropriations should be statutory to protect the commission's financial resources from the whims or ignorance of every finance committee. If they are also regular instead of specific, flexibility will be given in meeting new and unexpected demands in commission work; and one small, general appropriation frequently can accomplish more than several specific appropriations.

There is nothing in the law in most states to prevent a library commission from obtaining a specific appropriation for a special purpose, in addition to its regular appropriation, when this is deemed desirable.

**5 Scope of work.** In the first place, it is difficult to suggest a provision which will be sufficiently comprehensive to cover all new commission activities in an individual state, not to mention several states. Therefore, in the suggestions there has been included the provision which has been of the greatest service to one commission at least, namely, "and said commission shall perform such other services in behalf of public libraries as it may consider for the best interests of the state." This provision is in direct opposition to what has been advocated occasionally in the past when a clear and definite limit to commission activities has been suggested; but this work and field is growing more rapidly than legislation can forecast, and it would be unfortunate to handicap the work unnecessarily. Then, too, with every new direction the work might take, iron-bound legislative provisions would make amendments to the commission law necessary, and there is much danger in making possible a general attack on a good law through the necessity of amending some special section. With a conscientious and

intelligent commission there seems to be no reason for timidity or hesitation in giving the commission some initiative so long as its activities are confined to the field of public libraries, as the provision mentioned above as desirable, does limit it.

In regard to "shall advise" and "may advise," the Committee prefers the former. It looks unwise to appropriate state money for work, the performance of which is entirely optional. Then, if the commission has any working force at all, there is no additional expense attached to giving advice. In connection with traveling libraries, schools of instruction, library institutes, etc., the use of "may" seems preferable to "shall" since the expenditure of money should be at the discretion of the commission and subject to its state of finances.

In "scope of work" no reference was made to a legislative reference department, but there should be nothing in the law to prevent the establishment of such a department if the commission's funds will permit it. One member of the Committee gave an opinion that if no such department existed in a state, the commission should be left free to provide for it, but in his opinion, the work of a library commission should be with libraries, not with individuals. There can be no doubt, however, that a legislative reference department under a library commission would prove an advantage to a commission because it would be a department where tangible results could be seen, and a department of work which would appeal to the legislator.

In regard to normal school co-operation, the Committee would limit the instruction given normal school students in library administration to the administration of school libraries exclusively; for instruction in public library administration can be given to much better advantage by other than normal schools, preferably by the library commission.

**6 Reports.** The commission's report should be printed as other state departmental reports are printed. Since the work of the commission is with libraries and it is empowered to distribute publica-

tions to them, its own report should be distributed by the commission rather than by the secretary of state or any other officer.

One member of the Committee objected to the appearance of an itemized financial statement of the commission's expenditures in its report, on the ground of additional expense in printing without commensurate advantages, while another member favored the printing of such statement if it were not given publicity elsewhere. A biennial report was also suggested, but the frequency with which the general assembly convenes should be an important factor in determining the frequency of printing a commission report.

THE PRESIDENT then appointed committees as follows: On Libraries for United States penitentiaries: Chalmers Hadley (Ind.) Chairman, Mrs Mary E. S. Root (R. I.), W. F. Whitcher, (N. H.).

On Arrangements for mid-winter meetings of the League: A. L. Bailey (Dela.), H. E. Legler (Wis.), C. S. Greene (Cal.).

On Nominations: H. E. Legler (Wis.), Miss Helen U. Price (Pa.), Johnson Bringham (Ia.).

## SECOND SESSION

(Saturday, July 3, 1909, 9:30 a. m.)

A large audience gathered on Saturday morning in the ball-room of the Mt Washington Hotel to listen to the papers on "Work in the field, a series of personal experiences in the east and west."

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A FREE LANCE IN A WESTERN STATE

as related by MISS LUTIE E. STEARNS, Chief, Traveling library department, Wisconsin free library commission, was read by Miss Agnes Van Valkenburgh, Milwaukee:

Up to the time of the establishment of the first western library commission, the office of librarian was rightly considered among the sedentary occupations or professions, oft-times offering a pleasant field for the closing days of broken-down ministers, school teachers, aged feminine "Left-overs," and impoverished widows. With

the dawn of commission work in the West, a new type of library worker was demanded. Given a population in a single western state of 2,200,000 souls, 600,000 of these being native whites of native parents; 900,000 native whites of foreign parentage; and including in addition, from the census reports, 7,000 Austrians; 4,000 Belgians; 14,000 Bohemians; 10,000 French Canadians; 200 Chinese; 16,000 Danes; 17,000 Englishmen; 2,000 Finlanders; 2,000 French; 243,000 Germans; 6,000 Hollanders; 1,000 Hungarians; 24,000 Irishmen; 10,000 Indians; 2,000 Italians; 500 Mexicans; 61,000 Norwegians; 31,000 Poles; 4,000 Russians; 4,000 Scotch; 26,000 Swedes; 8,000 Swiss; 146 Turks; 3,000 Welshmen; 2,500 negroes; 500 from other countries and 500 born at sea, scattered over a district about the size of the New England states, averaging, however, only 36 people to the square mile, it can readily be seen that the field for work is a vast one, presenting countless opportunities to the live, enthusiastic library worker.

The West is indeed, the great "Melting pot" which, as Mr Roosevelt predicts, is destined to amalgamate the races into a type of manhood and citizenship far surpassing any existing people. In this amalgamation, the preacher, the teacher, the editor, and the librarian are the four almost equally important alchemists. Even if it were deemed desirable so to do,—and we would doubt the wisdom of the attempt—experience has proved that but little, if anything, can be done to transform the older foreign-born population. It is into the second generation, the young sons and daughters of this foreign parentage, that new ideas and a knowledge of American ideals must be instilled, largely through the medium of the printed page. Prevailing economic conditions require that wholesome literature must be furnished without money and without price through the school, public, or traveling library if right ideas and ideals are to become the burden of the common thought.

When the Wisconsin commission work was inaugurated in 1896, the conditions in many parts of the state were not unlike

those portrayed in Congress recently by a certain western statesman who described his state as "possessing a few towns struggling on with the ambition to be cities, with many frontier settlements, each surrounded with a fringe of empty tin cans, a horizon of sage brush and an unlimited destiny."

Library workers under such pioneer conditions should realize that, as someone has said, a man constantly fighting cold and hunger and nakedness is not always open to the gentler influence of a redeeming idea. The inaptitude for ideas which is engendered by want and misery is a condition which must always be reckoned with. Ours is the responsibility in this connection, indeed the high privilege, of so acting upon the social environment that "better thoughts will come into the hearts of men and better deeds will flow out of the more liberal, more human thought."

It is a fine thing to establish great systems of city libraries, branches, village libraries, and traveling library stations, but it is a far better thing, as someone has emphasized in another connection, to build up through libraries "that spirit of fellow feeling and right ideals among American citizens which, in the long run, is absolutely necessary if we are to see the principles of virile honesty and robust common sense triumph in our own civic life." It is a capacity for sympathy, for fellow-feeling and mutual understanding, which must lie at the basis of all successful movements for the betterment of social and civic conditions, and which, therefore, must actuate all commission work and endeavor. The commission worker must throw in his lot with those about him, making their interests his in every way. \* \* \*

Rural free delivery, carrying daily written and printed thought to the isolated; the rural telephone with its priceless advantages in social intercourse; the inter-urban trolley with the opportunities for new sights and sounds that it brings in its train; and the traveling library with its volumes of information, inspiration, and refreshment are all aiding most wonderfully in bringing about a spirit of brother-

hood, a fellow feeling and understanding between man and man.

Paraphrasing a recent observer, the drama of commission life is not a game of human solitaire; it is a drama made possible only by the human social relations of the players. We agree with Charles Hanford Henderson that it is a crime to take up any occupation which does not engage our love and interest; that it is a stupid thing to go on doing anything after the inspiration and joy and human profit have quite gone out of the doing. Particularly is this true of commission work that requires the giving out of so much enthusiasm and inspiration, so much of one's own personality and faith and ideals. There are some lines of work in which a woman or man may remain year after year, becoming more and more an automaton, but it is not so with commission work. There is constant change and variety in the various activities engaged in. An after-dinner speech at a banquet on Saturday night is followed, for example, by conducting the services in a little way-side chapel on Sunday morning with a sermonette on "Books and reading." Teachers' gatherings, farmers' institutes, state federation meetings—all are made the basis for talks along commission lines.

The free lance will have the joy, never experienced by one that specializes along one line of work, of seeing the complete development of the library idea in a town from the first visit, when the tender of a free traveling library is made, through the various stages of evolution until a free public library is housed in a \$50,000 Carnegie building, with a library school graduate as librarian—this the crowning achievement—in charge.

Again, a day's time will be spent, after securing the consent of a library board, in hiring a dray and six small boys and moving a library from dark and dingy quarters to more attractive and sunny rooms; the same evening being employed in speaking, first in English and then in German, at a mass meeting in the local opera house to arouse more interest in the local library. A few days later, a forced drive for the sake of a safe place in which to sleep will

be taken at 10 o'clock at night through the unbroken forest for eight miles, behind a pair of wildly galloping bronchos frightened by the shadows of the tall pines made by the lantern attached to the dashboard.

Some thrilling stories could be related of experiences with forest fires, which, viewed merely as a spectacle, are gorgeous beyond description, particularly at night, but terrible in the havoc and distress wrought in their train. The fact could be told of the hurried organization by the library visitor of a traveling library association in the grocery store of the little town of Saxon in northern Wisconsin, while the forest fires were burning a hundred rods away. Another town visited was seriously threatened by the approaching forest fires. Everything movable was packed by the citizens in vans and carts when the people knelt in the streets in prayer. The wind suddenly turned, the rain fell and the town was saved as by a miracle. There was no church in the little settlement and the local store was used as a place of thanksgiving. The proprietor of the store happened to have a graphophone with a record of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," which was played while the people, rejoicing, sang. A little paper was published in the hamlet and in it there appeared an account of the fire and the deliverance. So fervent did the editor become in his thanks to the Lord for the hamlet's safety, that the small font of capital "L's" soon became exhausted and in a large part of the article the Lord was referred to in lower-case letters, with no possible disrespect intended nor, we are certain, conveyed.

It is this insight into personal human life and suffering that the work among traveling library stations affords that is of the greatest interest and inspiration. In an isolated little hamlet, for example, one may find a bedridden woman who has not stood upon her feet for 16 years. The little traveling library is placed near the couch to which she is removed each morning by her son before he starts on his six-mile walk to the country school that he is teaching, oft-times carrying the books in the traveling library to his pupils. An

aged blind woman who lives in the neighborhood is led by a friend at frequent intervals to the little cottage where the "shut in" reads aloud some sweet story or some bits of verse. A visit will be made in another district to a country school where the children will be found resting at noon time under a spreading elm while one of the older pupils reads, as did one in a northern county, from the "Masterpieces of American literature." Again, the physical and moral cleaning-up of a certain household could be directly attributed to the reading of Zollinger's "Widow O'Callaghan's boys," secured from the local traveling library.

If from our 14 years of experience we may be permitted to give a bit of advice to those just entering upon the commission stage, we would say with Goethe, "Be careful what you pray for in your youth lest you get too much of it in your old age." There is so much to do in pioneer fields, so many roads have to be traveled, that one is inclined to fly about on the speediest trains or conveyances, stopping but a moment here and a moment there to answer the pressing appeals for assistance, leaving much undone that must be done later or giving room for the doing of much that must be done over.

A great optimist has said, "At no period of the world's history has life been so full of interest and of possibilities of excitement and enjoyment as for us who live in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is but the bare truth to say that never have the rewards been greater, never has there been more chance for doing work of great and lasting value than is now offered alike to statesman and soldier, to explorer and commonwealth builder, to the captain of industry, to the man of letters, to the man of science" and, he might have added—"to the commission worker."

MISS CHARLOTTE TEMPLETON, Secretary of the Nebraska library commission, then told of her work

#### WITH THE PRAIRIE DWELLERS OF NEBRASKA

I daresay that you expect from me thrilling accounts of Indians and cowboys

and experiences "on the range" and I fear that you will be sadly disappointed, for, contrary to the opinion of some of our eastern friends, we do not all wear blankets and live in tepees, nor do the cowboys ride madly through our streets throwing lariats and shooting off revolvers.

In the first place you must know that Nebraska southeast is very different from Nebraska northwest. We will draw a diagonal line across the State and consider each part separately.

The southeastern half is very like the other mid-western states, with rich farms, comfortable homes, prosperous towns and excellent schools. Practically all of our libraries are in this half of the State—small affairs many of them, to be sure, but the beginning has been made and well made, the State is prosperous and our people intelligent and we need not fear for their future.

Except in minor points these little libraries are, I think, very like new libraries anywhere. In raising money we are rather more apt, perhaps, to resort to a contest for guessing the weight of a pig than to a lawn social, and I fancy that our enthusiasm is a little more exuberant. When the woman, who has been selling "guesses" on a pig's weight at the county fair for the benefit of the library, discovers that the pig has been busily engaged in the meantime in eating off the flounce of her best summer frock, she is not at all dampened in spirits. We're that enthusiastic in Nebraska.

And perhaps we are a little more impetuous than our eastern friends. When a library was talked of in one of our small towns, a sign-painter got busy and painted as his contribution to the cause a huge sign—"Genoa public library." To be sure there was no library, neither money, nor room, nor books, but the question had been agitated, and such is our faith in Nebraska.

Perhaps, too, we are a little more direct in our methods. A few years ago a woman, who had been the leader in a successful library campaign in one of our western towns, was asked to give a paper at a

state library meeting on, "How to start a public library." "But," she said, "what is there to say? The way to start a public library is to start one."

It seems to me, too, that we are rather more democratic in our social relations, we are more cordial in working together in any movement for the public good. We have gone through the hardships of pioneer days together; through drought, prairie fires, and grass-hoppers, and now in our days of plenty we unite in our efforts to give our children some of the advantages of "back East" which seem to go hand in hand with that combination which Mr Corning spoke of the other night, "thrift and scenery." So we have built schools and a state university and public libraries.

But the public libraries are all to the southeast of the line which I drew to divide the State. When you cross the imaginary line you are in the real West. You can travel mile after mile without a sign of habitation, sometimes over prairies level as a floor; then through the sand-hills,—great mountains of sand—tufted with bunches of wild grass, and each with the crest scooped out by the wind which never ceases to blow; and into the country of buttes with their weird and fantastic shapes. All of this is our great cattle country. The infrequent towns are rather forlorn. They exist, of course, solely for the ranch trade and are tiny affairs,—the railroad station, cattle pen, a few stores and houses.

If you chance to be traveling on Saturday the towns will wear a lively air. The streets will be lined with cow ponies and wagons, and sombreros, spurs and high-heeled boots will be much in evidence. The cowboy is passing, and while, of course, we are all glad that land is coming under cultivation, that cattle are no longer turned out on the range to feed or starve as chance may be, that the conditions which made the cowboy are passing away, still we shall be rather sorry to lose this picturesque figure.

You can see that this part of the State is not as yet a favorable soil for public libraries. In the whole section of the

State of which I speak, into which you could easily put Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, and still perhaps have room for some of Maine, there are only two public libraries and these have just been organized and consist, one, I think, of 600 volumes and the other 300.

All of the commission work here is done by traveling libraries and individual loans, particularly the latter since people are so widely scattered that books from a traveling library cannot be easily circulated. Where we do have traveling library stations the books often go forty miles into the country.

Most of the people, particularly the young people, are eager, pathetically eager, for educational opportunities. There is an academy at Chaldron, a church school, where young people come in from the ranches of Nebraska and Wyoming. I have visited there several times and have met many of the students, and they are an interesting lot. I remember one cowboy—a man in the twenties—who came into the academy one winter and specified the studies which he wanted to take. It was a long list ending with "palite manners." I usually go up into that country to visit teachers' institutes and talk about children's books, and it is always a delight. They do not listen with that bored-to-death, have-heard-it-all-a-thousand-times-before expression with which teachers are so apt to greet speakers; they are intensely interested in everything you have to say.

As I said before, we do a good deal of work with individual loans in this part of the State, sending out, with the aid of the other libraries of Lincoln, pretty nearly everything that may be called for. This long distance loan work does not lack interest because of the absence of personal contact between patrons and librarian, for the letters—funny enough sometimes with their salutations of "Respected friend" or the somewhat unadorned "Miss"—often reveal pitiful limitations and aspirations which we might not get from a personal interview. And we are sometimes able, even at long

range, to fit the book to the occasion. Some weeks ago a man wrote for an extension of time on a book which he had, since the cyclone season was on and he found it very interesting to consult the book on cloud formation as he ran for the cyclone cellar. I believe that Miss Humphrey, in extending the time, suggested that he take out cyclone insurance on the book.

Of course our commission work is very like that of other states, with no special characteristics of its own, except that our field work is perhaps more difficult on account of our great distances and the fact that our railroads run mostly east and west with few connecting lines north and south.

Such is Nebraska as a library state and such the work of the Commission; interesting in the doing; big with possibilities for the future, but, I fear, commonplace in the telling. Much as I love the East, I am glad that my work lies in the West. Beautiful as are the mountains, I still rejoice in the prairies, for wide horizons, it seems to me, make for breadth of vision.

### THE STORY OF CONDITIONS DOWN IN MISSOURI

written by MISS ELIZABETH WALES,  
Secretary of the Missouri library commission, was read by Mr Purd B. Wright, a member of the Missouri commission:

Among its 46 brethren of the Union, Missouri is probably best known as the state to be skipped in travel and avoided in immigration,—one of the synonyms for trouble of which an increasing number seem to follow the flag. And yet, it is safe to say that nowhere will be found a people more loyal to their commonwealth or more thoroughly convinced that God in his providence has showered upon this region of the Middle West greater blessings, and more to the square mile than upon any other in the known world. It may be that this very faith in Providence has prevented the native Missourian from securing by his own action many good things which less favored states require to make their boundaries attractive.

However this may be, Missouri stands alone in many of the conditions it presents. Under a close definition of the term, 19 points in the state show well established public libraries, to represent an area of 69,000 miles and a population of 3,500,000. The appreciation of Mr Carnegie's generosity is as yet only sporadic. School libraries are developing rapidly, and form a fine basis for increasing the library spirit, but the peculiar terms of school laws prior to 1875 made all public schools seem really pauper or charity schools, and established a prejudice against them. Thus the united sentiment of the people has only during this generation made for real progress in public education. This situation has developed numbers of private and sectarian schools. These have, for three generations, carried forward the culture of the State, and to them it owes a debt of gratitude, which is ill-paid by a slighting comparison of their present resources with those of state institutions.

Along the Missouri river westward from the Mississippi lies a broad belt, which is the product of an early and conservative settlement, made possible by the commercial and pioneer opportunities of the great waterway; a region curving northwest where the river comes down along the western boundary, northeast to the points of early Mississippi crossings, and extending southward along the banks of the "Father of waters." Within this belt you will find most of the private schools, small colleges and military academies which were the educational institutions of an earlier day; Here are located perhaps 14 or 15 of the public libraries and all of the large universities.

What, then, of other portions of the State? They are developed only in spots and in many places are found what one of our school-men has aptly called "educational lowlands." Add to these facts, the paradox of a state more southern in sentiment in its northern half and vice versa, and it is easy to see that the common good will under such conditions assume various guises, not to say disguises.

The school offers an enticing opportunity to the library worker, and by means of our traveling libraries it is being opened to us. In the organizing and holding-together of the small school collections now existent, lies our strongest duty in this field. At present all of our work is done by correspondence, but some queer conditions are uncovered. Shipping directions are often confusing; in one instance a teacher wrote from Gladstone, Morgan county, sending an agreement signed by "Citizens of Camden county" and requesting shipment of library to Bagnell, Miller county. The books went and came and were duly enjoyed, but the name of the place to which they went is still unrevealed. A river captain freighted them Bagnell and the rest of the journey is shrouded in mist.

Many of our patrons are over careful. One of the rural school teachers visiting our office at the Christmas holidays stated that not many of the children had used the books. Inquiry revealed the fact that they were jealously preserved from the dust and flies in the front parlor of one of the school-directors. Occasionally the teacher enticed a pupil to wait at the gate while a book was brought to him, but who ever would think of violating the sanctity of the front-parlor just for a "library book." A tin covered, key-locked case was taken back by the teacher as baggage, and the transferred library became a real thing to 19 school children.

Troubles with statistics are so universal that I will not take up your time with a recitation of our woes. One borrower, however, gives such good reasons for her disregard that I am anxious to present her case for treatment. The letter begins by saying "I am quite sure that you wrote me that the cards were of no use, but I have picked them all out of the waste basket, I think; anyway they have not been in the books since the first day, for I arranged through the telephone and other ways to have each borrower pass them on to another, and so kept them going most of the time. This I could not have done had I followed your rules and I supposed you wanted the books used."

A very correct supposition but what a good record was lost.

One of the libraries has been successfully placed in the extreme southwest corner of the State, at the suggestion of a correspondent just over the border in Arkansas. This friend requested us to send notices to her club friends in Missouri. Here one library circulates books in three towns. Don't ask us if any of them go over the State line; we don't know.

In like manner we sometimes receive leaders from our brothers and sisters in the work. All around by way of Wisconsin, I heard of a little venture in Wentzville, Missouri. Several pleasant trips were made there and three energetic days were spent in cataloging the library. It did not survive the operation long. In two months it was dead. The Secretary was not bidden to the obsequies either, simply notified that all was over. Field work? verily,—Potter's field!

Speeches at local festivities and association meetings have proved the open sesame to traveling libraries in about the usual proportion. The day at the M—— Chautauqua is given as an instance. A blazing hot day and a treeless ground. Upon arrival I sent the case of books in an express cart, and by good luck caught a bus going out. The lady whose cordial invitation had brought me there was in the bus, but did not know me. I discovered her identity by the hearty welcome she gave to a brass band, which boarded the vehicle half-way out; they were fellow performers. Reaching the grounds I made myself known and found that my coming, my name, my very subject had all been forgotten! However, a place was made for me, between the witching hours of four and five p. m., to speak to a small remaining crowd of people who had paid the gate fee and wanted all there was in it. They didn't all go before I finished.

Next morning I hunted up those interested in traveling libraries and found a doctor and one other man, with five trailers in shape of women and girls and a half-grown boy. These seven were citizens of the same community. For the



library purposes I adjudged them "responsible citizens" and had the pleasure of seeing them drive off at noon bearing my sample case of 50 books to Molino, where the doctor, who confessed to having plenty of time, has made quite a successful circulation from his office.

In library organization and reorganization our opportunities are rapidly increasing. The value of it as yet hardly appeals to the majority, but we have a number of librarians, whose accomplishment in unorganized libraries is pointing the way to better things. About a year ago I was called into consultation with a board of directors by special appeal of the librarian. This Board had a royal receipt for a new catalog, thus:

- 1 Take a printed class list 10 years old.
- 2 Go through shelves and cross out all books worn out or missing.
- 3 Make careful note as you go along of all additions.
- 4 Copy and reprint and *There you are!*

This librarian said if it was to be done that way she wanted a vacation. The library was one of 8,000 volumes, and five or six months were recently spent in reclassifying and making a card catalog.

Like a good stepmother, we must win our way into the confidence of our family of libraries, colleges and schools, for they have all been getting along after a fashion without us. The sentiment of union may have been wanting, in some places, but let us hope that the spirit of helpfulness already demonstrated will grow and broaden until we stand firmly entrenched in the philosophy "Each for all and all for each."

MISS SARAH B. ASKEW, Organizer of the New Jersey commission, then presented a graphic picture of

### **JERSEY ROADS AND JERSEY PATHS**

being stories of pine woods folk, charcoal burners and other people. Among other experiences Miss Askew told the story of one town library:

This town seemed to possess all the kinds of people in New Jersey, old and

new, poor and rich. Egypt—we will call it—is a town of 2,000 inhabitants, just about 45 minutes from Broadway. There are three strata of society, or rather two strata of society with the people in between. The nabobs, perhaps 20 in number, live on top of the hill. They call this Upper Egypt. The bobs live at the foot of the hill. This is Lower Egypt. The people live in between—Middle Egypt. The bobs formed perhaps one-fourth of the population. The Upper Egyptians were like the "lilies," they toiled not, neither did they spin. I beg pardon—that is a slip—they spun all of the time, in their automobiles; but Solomon in all his glory behaved not like one of these.

Lower Egypt was true to its name. There Italians, Hungarians, Irishmen and Poles lived, fought, worked in the factories and died. They lived in as close quarters as if the blue hills of Jersey had not stretched away on all sides of them. The horizon for them was bounded by the walls of the glue factory, the canning factory, the oil mills and the saloon. Chief among their diversions was the taunting of the nabobs. Catholic they were, all of them, and the priest was the only feared authority.

Middle Egypt, as a rule, pursued its peaceful way, unmindful of bobs and nabobs, except when scuttling from under their automobiles or dodging over-ripe tomatoes on their run for the morning train. Upper, Middle and Lower Egypt were on the streets early. Middle Egypt commuted, Lower Egypt worked in factories, Upper Egypt generally got home "early in the morning." Upper and Lower Egypt were most advanced in views, we might say radical. It was strange in how many ways they were alike. Both played cards and drank all night, both were given to a lack of manners, both looked with scorn at public schools. Middle Egypt was conservative to the back bone, and, as a rule, desired no intercourse with their neighbors above and below. They were good, plain, hard-working, every-day people. It was in itself a good, old-fashioned, rather hide-bound country town.

One of the nabobs heard of the traveling libraries and thought that they were perfectly sweet. She got one for Lower Egypt. To give the undercrust the pleasure of gazing at things they might not attain, she installed it in a small building on her place—a beautifully furnished room. Then she invited the Egyptians. They preferred the outer darkness and none came. She wanted to give the library up—she was going away. This directed our attention to the place.

If ever a place needed a library, that did. Middle Egypt was in a rut—girls given to envying the nabobs, nothing for them to do but ape them; women gossiping and given to details; men whose lives were bounded by the seven o'clock train in the morning and the six o'clock train at night; churches dissentient; schools poor; no school library, and not even a woman's club.

I secured the names of the ministers (including that of the priest), their denominations, the name of the mayor, the political boss and learned his politics; learned the names of the supervising principal, superintendents of the factories, and the owners; studied the town as well as I could, and studied briefly the glue, oil and canning business, so as to have something to talk about. For the time I meant to leave the nabobs out of consideration—their time should come later.

On reaching Egypt I went straight to the school. Fortune favored me. The supervising principal was a disheartened Harvard boy, and he was glad to see me. We discussed the school laws and libraries in Massachusetts. He told me there was not a town in Massachusetts without a library, at which I evinced great surprise. Then I told him that I had come to find out from him just what the situation in Egypt was, as I knew he would sense it better than anyone else. How glad that man was to talk! As I listened I gathered that it was the usual country town with two added drawbacks—the bobs and the nabobs. Should I call them drawbacks? I did then, but everything I called a drawback in that blessed town at first, proved a lever later on.

I told the supervising principal that I knew he wanted a school library, and he said that only someone like myself could understand how much he wanted it. I capped this by—"Why don't you get it?" "How can I?" "Easily, you raise \$10, the State gives you \$20. There's your start." "How can I get \$10? I can't afford \$10, but I can give two." "Let me talk to the teachers and then to the children?" "Certainly, there is a teachers' meeting this afternoon, and we will call the children together just before school is out."

In the meantime I drew up a hasty program. The children I would tell of the fairy stories, the adventures, the boarding school stories and the picture books. I would tell little stories from books and ask them to bring their penny next day, if they could, to get these wonderful things. For the teachers I made out a hasty list of books that would help them, and read it to them; told of car fares saved, work made easy, pleasant hours in store by means of a library.

Each child went home with the same eager story. Some to Middle Egypt and some to Lower. I found where most of the teachers boarded, and got a room there. By lucky chance, the mayor lived there also. I made my round of the ministers that afternoon and told them how we depended upon them. Some were dubious as to the need, but were willing to go into it to help the other denominations—"for ourselves you know we hardly need it," etc.

The priest who ruled over Lower Egypt was a giant of a fair-haired Irishman. My grandmother was an Irish woman (a good assortment of nationalities among one's ancestors is necessary to an Organizer). Father Fitzgerald and I became fast friends. Help me? Sure, and everyone who didn't come to the library should do penance. Would I talk to a Sodality meeting? The chance I wanted! He would introduce me to the boss. The boss owned a saloon, and came from County Cork also. My grandmother came from County Cork. He was a self-made man and proud of it, and told me of the job. To him I talked the town-supported library. I told

him his cool, business head could see, etc. His fat sides shook as he thought of voting in something the nabobs would mostly support. (My suggestion). Sure they (the Lower Egyptians) would come and vote for it, he would crack their thick skulls if they didn't. Could we talk to them? Sure. We could use the hall over his saloon.

That night the mayor was approached in a round-about way and maneuvered into line. Next morning the factories were visited, the superintendents interviewed, much hemming and hawing was necessary. Two were won over to favor the plan; the third held out and fought us until almost the last. One of the two was won because of my knowledge of glue-making. His idea seemed to be that if I knew about glue, I must necessarily know about libraries.

Next day we found we had got together \$94, and with one lending a hand here and another there we started a school library.

Middle Egypt still, as a whole, did not favor the municipal library. They all owned property on which they paid taxes. The library opened. The delighted younger people took books home, and Middle Egypt began to wake up. There was one ruse we used that I am proud of. To each child was dictated a little paragraph showing how little the library would cost the small property owners. They were asked to take it home and show it to father and mother. It is a well known fact that whatever a child brings home from school to show, you've got to look at before you can live in peace; so these papers were read.

When the ladies' societies of the churches were addressed, each woman pledged herself to win a vote, and each signed a petition for the town council to put the library question to a vote. This same petition was sent to the saloon of Mr O'Callahan (the boss), and if they (the Lower Egyptians) didn't sign it he knew the "raison." That being the case, when the petition was presented to the Council it won out with flying colors; and one fine morning the nabobs woke up, or came

home, and found the town had voted for them to support a free public library.

At first the library was in the school, but it was too crowded, and the school was on the border of Lower Egypt, and the librarian was scared at night—although Mr O'Callahan insisted that she had only "to holler if anyone bothered her, and he would knock their block off." Here is where the nabobs came into use. The well-meaning lady who had secured the traveling library in the first place was approached. She thought this plan was sweet also, and was willing to do anything, from giving the children a ride each day in her automobile to having a lawn fête for them. Instead, we begged the small house used before. She gave it, and paid for the moving, helped fix it up, and incidentally had the time of her life, she said. This building was put on the main street, next to the post-office, and we persuaded another nabob to furnish it. They gave a girls' club room and a children's room.

Such is the tale of the library and should any of you, at any time, be just "45 minutes from Broadway," you might possibly be in Egypt. Visit the library and Mr O'Callahan.

Miss Askew told further of the rural community libraries at the cross-roads, of the traveling library work among the granges, and especially of the part played by story-telling in locating traveling libraries and arousing interest in books among the dwellers in the piney woods and mountains of North Jersey, closing with an account of the introduction of lace-making in one locality.

By unanimous request it was decided to "have a good time a little longer and let Sister Askew talk," and a "revised version" of the parables, followed by the story of "Brer Rabbit and the brier patch," were given in her inimitable way.

The program closed with a delightful day's journey

### ON THE TRAIL OF THE BOOK-WAGON

personally conducted by MISS MARY L. TITCOMB, of the Washington county free library, Hagerstown, Md.

After introducing her audience to the wagon itself, and its driver, who is a true missionary of the book, Miss Titcomb took them with her on an early spring morning "Along a portion of the Old National pike, that road full of historic memories, and echoing still to the tread of that army of emigrants that for years continued to drive our frontier westward. We see no actual poverty, but much thrift and comfort." Stops are made at many prosperous farm-houses where books for each member of the family are chosen, and there is much pleasant conversation over the books themselves and the news of the neighborhood as well. At the next house we find a lad of seventeen or eighteen who leaves his loaded wagon to ask if we have anything of Shakespeare's on our shelves. He says that he read one book of his once, and that he "thinks he is a real good writer," a tribute to the universality of genius quite delightful to encounter. Happily we find a volume of the Rolfe edition tucked away in one corner, and register again a vow never to forget that the best is none too good for the country. We meet all kinds of people, nice kind people, gruff and surly men who would not have hesitated two years ago to tell Mr Thomas that the country was throwing away money spending it on "such foolishness" as books and the book wagon. Now, however, public opinion is sufficiently won to make them think it wise not to disapprove too openly. As always with a library, the greatest boon is to the women and children, but the men in the country who read are in a larger proportion than in the city.

But what sort of books do my people read? I hear you ask. I can only say that they read, even as you and I, or perhaps more accurately, even as the people in Hagerstown with a balance in favor of the country. The number of classed books

borrowed is greater in the country, the percent of fiction being only a trifle over 50. Of the classes, 200 and 300 are especially popular. Colquhoun's "Mastery of the Pacific" went out with the wagon a year ago, and has never since been returned, but goes from neighbor to neighbor. One cannot always tell why a book is in demand, but it is probable in this case, that it interested some man, who has talked it over with his friends.

The taste in religious books is catholic, with a preference for those of a devotional nature. When it comes to poetry, we find much more time for it in the country than in the city. Seldom is a book of poems sent out with the wagon, overlooked. American history, biographies of Americans, "good Christian biographies," and travel of all sorts are read. Of the fiction, fully 75 per cent. is juvenile, which means that the books are read by both parents and children. As the sun falls low on the Blue hills we reach Big Basin, where we leave the wagon to go on for two days more, while we take the train for home.

MR LEGLER then presented the following

#### **REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

President—Arthur L. Bailey, Delaware.

First Vice-President—Louis R. Wilson, North Carolina.

Second Vice-President—Frances Hobart, Vermont.

Secretary-Treasurer — Margaret W. Brown, Iowa.

Publication committee—Clara F. Baldwin, Minnesota; Charlotte Templeton, Nebraska; Chalmers Hadley, Indiana.

Upon motion the Secretary was instructed to cast the ballot for the above named officers.

Adjourned.